

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Cowper.*



A LETTER FROM MR. FRED SAUNDERS.

"ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED."

CHAPTER V.

THE road where Fred lay was not much frequented, and he slept on undisturbed; a few persons passed by and made some sarcastic remarks on the softness of his bed and the grace of his attitude, etc., but no one seemed to know him. At length, when the sun was sinking he woke to consciousness. He

opened his eyes suddenly, snatched the handkerchief from his face, and sat up.

At first he could not realise his position. He looked stupidly round, and by degrees only took in the various facts that presented themselves to his mind. He had slipped from his horse, and had laid down to sleep by the roadside, he supposed. It was just that last glass that had done it, he would take care how he drank any of old Featherstone's mixture again; how bad it had made him feel. And to lie down in

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PRICE ONE PENNY

the public road, too, and to get in this mess—he was glad, though, he had had sense enough to hang his horse at the gate.

Then as he stretched out his hand for his hat he saw the flowers and the glove. Why, some one had been near enough to look at him; some young girl or lady, perhaps, who had dropped her treasure in her fright and had hurried away afraid to return and fetch them, even if she had missed them. Well, he supposed he did not look altogether fascinating.

But as he now pushed the hair from his hot forehead the pain caused by the movement of his hand called his attention to it.

Why, he had cut his hand and bound it up! But no, he could not have tied it like that, for it was his right hand, and it was bound neatly in a lady's pink silk scarf too! He wondered who had done it, and when. Some one before he left the town perhaps; and yet that could not be, for his mind was pretty clear up to the time when he came away. Well, whoever had done it, it was very good of them, and more than he deserved, at any rate.

How did he come by that white handkerchief? He must have picked up some one else's; he had no white handkerchief of his own. It was evidently a lady's handkerchief and had a faint smell of rose leaves lingering about it, something like his mother used to have.

Ah! there was a name delicately marked in ink in the corner, that would tell him something, at any rate.

Turn it over, Fred Saunders, and read the name. Rub your bloodshot eyes and hold it nearer, now farther off, there's no mistake about it, those are the letters,

Lizzie Moore,

12

1868.

The name more precious to you than any other thing in the world, in spite of your desperate recklessness. Lizzie Moore! Were those the tears of a drunken maudlin sensibility that filled his eyes? Oh, surely, no.

Gradually the whole truth dawned upon him—somehow she had been walking near that place gathering flowers. She had seen him in his degradation; had bound up his hand, and had covered his face—his disfigured, bloated face—from the gaze of the passers-by. She had tethered his straying horse for him, and in leaving him had forgotten her glove and her flowers.

Fred Saunders covered his face with his hands and groaned aloud. How long he sat thus he never knew, but at length tenderly placing the handkerchief and glove and flowers in his bosom, he staggered to the pool, and tried to gather from the reflection it gave back something of the nature of his appearance. He turned away disgusted; and loathing himself with a bitter loathing, he mounted his horse, and rode home in the deepening twilight.

It has been said—I think by Dean Goulbourn—"that no sin ever presents itself to the mind of any individual in the bare nakedness of its wretchedness;" if it did, it would be at once repulsive to us. It comes to us wrapped about in a robe of excuses and plausibilities. There is always some urgent reason why it is not so wrong for us to do it, or which palliates the wrong, if we ourselves are the guilty ones. When Nathan came to David, and presented the unvarnished picture of his sin before him, he did not recognise the likeness. He turned

with a holy indignation, and at once passed the sentence against one who could be so guilty. But when "Thou art the man!" was uttered by the prophet, conviction struck home into his soul, and the evil he had done stood out before him in all its undisguised loathsomeness.

So it had been with Fred Saunders. He would have been greatly offended if any one had hinted to him the possibility of his becoming a drunkard. He "knew" he had "too much self-respect;" he would never so "let himself down;" he had "no liking for drink," and so on. No, he was certain there was no danger of such a thing for him of all men. So he argued, and so he went on self-blinded, actually and positively unconscious that he was sliding down, down, down the very precipice which he was so certain he never would approach.

After any excess he always "pulled himself up," as he called it; but then he always had some excuse ready why, on this one occasion, it was a thing that could scarcely be avoided. Some one had asked him; "to have refused them would have offended." He had business at such and such an inn; he was obliged "just to taste something," or "the horrid stuff they sold was so bad no sober fellow could stand it," and so on. And though the habit he was forming was affecting his whole life; affecting his temper and making him irritable; affecting his energies and causing him to neglect his business; affecting his character, his health, his conscience, and his whole soul, he could not resist.

But now it pleased God, by means of the white handkerchief and the soft, silken, blood-stained scarf, to let the light of conviction pour into his soul, and he saw himself and his sin in all its hideousness, and a great trembling seized him as the knowledge of what he was fast becoming forced itself upon him. Long and earnestly did he struggle and pray; ever and anon did he read the marked text in his mother's little Bible as the words of agonised entreaty fell from his lips, "Save me and help me, I humbly beseech thee, O Lord."

The morning light was softly breaking over the sky before he sought his pillow, and if he then felt strong to dare and do, it was not because of any false confidence that possessed him. By God's mercy, his heart's cry now was, "The Lord my strength, He teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight."

The next morning, as Lizzie opened the house door and let in the fresh pure air, a little farm-boy put into her hands an envelope, containing a scrap of paper, on which was written, "May God bless you; by His mercy you have saved me.—F. S." And Lizzie, while she wondered what she had done, thanked God and took courage.

CHAPTER VI.

LIZZIE had no secrets from her aunt. All that had transpired she was made acquainted with; and though in telling all she had to tell about Fred she told more than she knew of about herself, she met with nothing but loving sympathy and encouragement from her aunt.

The winter set in early, and was very severe in their neighbourhood, and there was deep snow long before Christmas. Lizzie was a good deal within doors, but scraps of the news especially interesting to her reached her ears from time to time, which quite satisfied her and made her heart glad. One evening her uncle had just come in from Singleton,

and was getting his tea, and in his recital of the various occurrences of the day, this caught her ear: "Mr. Fred Saunders rode home with me to-day. What an intelligent, well-informed young man he is when he is himself! It seems he has been president or secretary or something of the Farmers' Club. To-day he quite suddenly resigned his office. There was a smart hubbub among the members about it, for he's a very popular young man, and most excellent company, they tell me. It seems they had counted on his services for a long time."

Another time, a month or so later, when Mrs. White sat with Lizzie at their work, she said, "I really do hope, dearie, that Mr. Fred Saunders is going back into his old boyhood ways again. He is so regular at church, and yesterday he stayed to the Communion. I was so thankful to see him there once again."

"Mother," Jack burst out, "who do you think is going to take Mr. Mason's Sunday class for good? Why our Fred Saunders; and the boys are just in fits about him; they say he's such a kind teacher. I'm right glad I'm in the class, however."

"Hetty," said Mr. White, "poor Benjamin Jones is dead. He got his leg smashed in the thrashing machine at Oakley Farm. He has worked for the Saunderses, father and son, ever since he was a lad. They say he had been drinking too much cider, or it would not have happened. The men are so full of their master's goodness to him. He never left him day or night after the doctor said there was no hope. Mr. Mason being ill, there was no one but Fred to read him a verse or say a prayer. There's a marvellous change come over that young man, by God's good grace. I used to feel he was going very hard along the wrong road, and I didn't think I could have given him our Lizzie. I've a notion or two that she has something to do with the alteration in him after all."

"I say, Lizzie," said Jack, "here's a pretty go; there's notices put up that Mr. Mason and Mr. Saunders are going to form a Temperance Association. All Mr. Saunders's men are going to join, and all his Sunday boys, and my precious self, too; mother must tempt me with no more 'strengthening' spoonfuls of port wine. I fancy I'm strong enough to do without them. This I'm sure of, that I'm going in for everything that Mr. Fred Saunders starts. The men say he addressed them all in the granary after poor Ben Jones was buried, and spoke so touchingly about the evils of drinking to excess that they all became abstainers at once. He used to find them cider, you know, and now, instead of that, he's going to spend the money in joints of meat and sacks of flour to be divided amongst them."

And after hearing all these things Lizzie again thanked God. She had seldom met Mr. Saunders since the receipt of his little note, and had never once spoken to him. Once or twice in coming out of church she had caught him looking at her earnestly, and she had always returned his respectful salute with a blushing and smiling face, but nothing more had passed between them.

But the months sped away, and the anniversary of that memorable October day came round in its proper place. Lizzie was alone with her work and her thoughts, for her uncle and aunt had gone on a three-days' visit to their eldest boys, one of whom was about to be married; and the rest were employed at their out-of-door occupations.

She was sitting at her work in the afternoon, when the same little messenger who had come to her a year ago put into her hands a letter, and this time a somewhat bulky letter, too. "From Mr. Fred Saunders if you please, ma'am," he said.

I am not going to tell you all that letter contained. I am not afraid you would get tired of hearing it, but it is certainly no business of yours or mine; it was one of those epistles which only concerned the writer and the written to, but I don't mind giving you just the winding up of it.

"Fifteen months ago you refused my offer, dear Miss Moore, and a year ago this very day you proved to me that in spite of this you bestowed upon me your pitying aid. The knowledge of what you did for me that day has been my greatest earthly hope and comfort, just as the possession of your handkerchief and scarf have been my greatest earthly treasure. Will you let me repeat my offer? Will you bless with yourself the life you have been the means under God of saving from destruction? I cannot wait for you to send another letter to me. Within an hour after you receive this I shall be with you myself to learn your decision."

Did our shy Lizzie run away? Oh, no. She went to her room just for a little space, but her step was unwavering and her eye bright, and then she sat down to read the letter again and to await his coming.

And he came. When Lizzie met him at the door and led him into the little sitting-room he looked the very personification of manly uprightness and steadfastness of purpose. And as he took her hand, and lifting up her blushing, tearful face, he asked in gentle tones, "How is it to be, dear little Lizzie?"—dear little Lizzie, indeed!—she did not flinch nor falter. The old yellow letter seemed to be once again spread out before her eyes, as her aunt's written words came gently from her lips, "Fred, what God helps me to be to you I will be, and may He bless us and guide us all our lives long!"

I don't think Lizzie's seams got finished that afternoon, her time was occupied in other ways, but after Fred was gone she became as nearly as possible her old bright simple self, attending to every one's wants and wishes, till her aunt returned to take her usual place.

And so Lizzie Moore was engaged to be married. When Jack heard of it he allowed his enthusiasm to escape in a long poetical eulogy on his cousin, intending to send it to a country paper. Fred got hold of it, however, and begged as a special favour that the ms. might be given to him only as a wedding present, and Fred got his way.

I am at liberty to give you the first verse only of this valuable production. Comfort yourselves, dear readers, under the deprivation with my honest assurance in words which some one has put in an Irishman's mouth, "If ye get one of them, ye have got all the rest that ye didn't have, for both were so much like neither ye couldn't tell tother from which."

"Oh, little I thought when to Oakley Farm

Our Lizzie's refusal I carried,

That her 'No' would turn 'Yes' to our loss and harm,

And that she after all would be married.

But this I must say, She's the dearest and best,

In her temper, and doings, and face,

While he, dear old Fred—no offence to the rest—

Is the jolliest chap in the place."

RECENT CENTRAL AFRICAN EXPLORATIONS.

III.—THE REGION OF LAKE NYASSA.

NYASSA, the most southern of the chain of the great fresh-water lakes of Central Africa, was discovered by Dr. Livingstone, accompanied by his brother, Mr. Charles Livingstone, and Dr. Kirk, the invaluable British Consul-General at Zanzibar, a little before noon on the 16th September, 1859, the year following the discovery of the Tanganyika and Victoria lakes. It is a curious circumstance that two months later, on the 19th November, Dr. Roscher, a German who had, it appears, travelled, by way of the Rovuma, from the east coast in Arab disguise, also reached the lake. Dr. Roscher unfortunately fell a victim to the treachery of the natives, and was murdered only a short distance from the eastern shore. The English travellers ascended the Shiré valley from the Zambesi, and reached Nyassa at its southern end, and at the point where the overflow of its waters forms the Shiré river. This river joins the Zambesi about ninety miles from its exit into the Indian Ocean. Except for the distance of sixty-five miles, there is a free water-way from the Kongoné mouth of the Zambesi to Lake Nyassa. The obstruction is caused by a series of cataracts occupying the middle portion of the Shiré, named the Murchison Cataracts. Lake Nyassa being 1,300 feet above the level of the ocean, these cataracts are formed by the abrupt descent of the surplus lake-waters from the higher to the lower level. Five of them are very grand. The fall is not less than 1,200 feet in a distance of forty miles. The Shiré valley itself is beautifully wooded, though in the low grounds hot and unhealthy, and infested by mosquitos.

Before making the ascent to Nyassa, Dr. Livingstone and his companions, after travelling over a mountainous country eastwards of the Shiré valley, had on the 18th of April discovered the Shirwa lake, "a considerable body of bitter water, abounding in leeches, fish, crocodiles, and hippopotami." This lake is 1,800 feet above the level of the sea, and the taste of its waters resembles that of a weak solution of Epsom salts. The country around is described as very beautiful, and clothed in the richest vegetation.

Unable on their first visit to Nyassa to do little more than gaze on its waters, the same trio of travellers two years later returned to explore its shores. Arriving at the foot of the cataracts in the Pioneer, a small steamer which had been placed at Dr. Livingstone's service by the British Government, they from that point travelled past the obstructions, carrying with them a light four-oared gig, and embarking on the Upper Shiré, advanced under canvas through the lakelet Pamalombé, an extension of the river, and sailed right into the lake. Rounding a grand mountainous projection which gives to Nyassa a shape somewhat resembling the well-known jack-boot of the Italian peninsula, they named the promontory Cape Maclear, in honour of their friend the Astronomer-Royal at the Cape of Good Hope, as in honour of Dr. Kirk the mountains on the west of the Shiré valley had been named the Kirk Range. With the aid of the boat, the work of exploration was continued from the 2nd September to the 27th October, 1861. On the western side the explorers found the lake surmounted

by ranges of well-wooded hills. Northwards the mountains became loftier, and presented some magnificent views, range towering above range, until to the gaze of the travellers the dim and lofty outlines projected against the sky and bounded the prospect. These towering masses on both sides seemed to close in towards the northern extremity of the lake, which, however, the explorers failed to reach. Along the southern part of the eastern shore run two parallel ranges, the nearer being covered with scraggy trees, while the more eastern and higher range rises bare and rugged, and with jagged peaks shooting high into the air.

As might be inferred from its mountainous framework, Nyassa is subject to severe and sudden gales; so frequently were they encountered during the exploring cruise, that Dr. Livingstone named it "The Lake of Storms." Its extent was estimated at 200 miles in length, and from fifty to sixty miles in breadth. It is of profound depth, and its waters have the deep blue or indigo tinge of the Indian Ocean. The rivers flowing in from the east and west coasts are sufficient to account for the large volume of the Shiré river. There is an annual rise of the waters of the lake in January to the extent of three feet, followed by a consequent flooded condition of its effluent. In the "Zambesi and its Tributaries," by David and Charles Livingstone, a full account is given of the beautiful scenery of the Nyassa coastline, of the products of its adjoining districts, and of the tribes on its shores.

When Dr. Livingstone first visited this region, the Manganja people occupied and held sway over the entire country of the Lower Shiré valley, which is described as a delightful country, the highlands well wooded, and abounding in clear, cool, gushing streams. The Manganja are an aboriginal race, and were found to be industrious, working in iron, cotton, and basket-making, and also cultivating the soil extensively, "Many of the men," says Dr. Livingstone, "are intelligent-looking, with well-shaped heads, agreeable faces, and high foreheads. We soon learned to forget colour, and we frequently saw countenances resembling those of white people we had known in England, which brought back the looks of forgotten ones vividly before the mind." The region east of the lake is occupied by the Waiyau, a race very inferior intellectually to the Manganja, or true natives of Nyassa, but far superior in courage. The Waiyau are jocular and merry, given to travelling, bold and warlike. They have round, apple-shaped heads, as distinguished from the long, well-formed heads of the Manganja. Their language, which is difficult to master, differs also very much from that of the Nyassa race, and holds good in the large territory between the Indian Ocean and the lake. Westward from the lake the Nyassa tongue is spoken over a vast tract. From the slight variety of the dialects Dr. Livingstone surmises that the peoples of Lake Tanganyika, of the region westward of Nyassa, and those also of the Rivers Shiré and Zambesi, are all of one stock. To the north-west of Nyassa dwell the terrible Mazitu, a Zulu tribe. From their highlands these marauders make sudden swoops on the villages of

the plains, their course marked by devastation and bloodshed. The Mazitu are known also as the Maviti and Watuta, and are a cause of terror to all the native tribes.

The countries that border on the Shiré and Lake Nyassa have been in recent years the great slave-hunting grounds of East Africa. It is estimated that no fewer than 20,000 slaves are annually conveyed from the western to the eastern side of the lake in Arab dhows, or are driven across the Shiré by land routes farther south, on their way to the east coast. Everyone acquainted with Dr. Livingstone's travels and writings knows how resolutely he laboured to expose and so to do away with the slave trade—that terrible curse, or, as he terms it, "running sore of Africa." On the east coast it is carried on alike by the Arabs and the Portuguese.

It will give a deepened interest to what follows of our account of Lake Nyassa and of recent exploration and missionary effort in that region, if we bear in mind the great purpose to which Livingstone devoted his life, and which prompted all the efforts made by him as an explorer. That purpose was the opening up of Africa to civilisation and the Gospel. If he denounced and exposed the slave traffic, it was because it stood an insuperable barrier in the way of the elevation and enlightenment of the African people. In his introduction to the volume in which he recounts the discovery and exploration of Lake Nyassa, he thus speaks: "This account is written in the earnest hope that it may contribute to that information which will yet cause the great and fertile continent of Africa to be no longer kept wantonly sealed, but made available as the scene of European enterprise, and will enable its people to take a place among the nations of the earth, thus securing the happiness and prosperity of tribes now sunk in barbarism or debased by slavery; and, above all, I cherish the hope that it may lead to the introduction of the blessings of the Gospel."

The great missionary traveller, in grappling with the gigantic problem of the redemption of Africa, was not without his well-defined plans of practical operation. Lake Nyassa is specially identified with these, for he had marked it out as a position to be by all means won and held by the Christian trader and missionary. Very early he saw that the hope of Africa, crushed as it was by the slave traffic, lay in the combined operations of legitimate commerce and missionary effort. To this end he pleaded the cause of Africa before the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; and to this end, also, he embarked nearly the whole of his fortune in the unsuccessful endeavour to place a steamer on Lake Nyassa. The auspicious planting of the Universities' Mission on the Shiré, in which he cordially assisted, filled Dr. Livingstone's mind with fond hopes for the future, as its subsequent failure and abandonment gave to him the bitterest disappointment. In his fourth visit to Nyassa in 1866—for he had visited the lake a third time in 1863—when entering on that last and memorable journey from which he was not to return, Dr. Livingstone came to that point where, with his companions, he had discovered the lake in 1859. The scene seems to have recalled not only his own personal sorrows, but also his blighted hopes for the fair region of Nyassa. Here is the touching record:

"In the course of this day's march (13th September, 1866), we pushed close to the lake, and could

see the whole plainly. There we first saw the Shiré emerge, and there also we first gazed on the broad waters of Nyassa. Many hopes have been disappointed here. Far down on the right bank of the Zambesi lies the dust of her whose death changed all my future prospects; and now, instead of a check being given to the slave trade by lawful commerce on the lake, slave dhows prosper! It is impossible not to regret the loss of good Bishop Mackenzie, who sleeps far down the Shiré, and with him all hope of the Gospel being introduced into Central Africa. The silly abandonment of all the advantages of the Shiré route by the bishop's successor I shall ever bitterly deplore; but all will come right some day, though I may not live to participate in the joy, or even see the commencement of better times."

When the sad intelligence of Dr. Livingstone's demise at Ilala, south of Lake Bemba, reached England, the national heart was deeply touched. Amid the modes in which it was sought to honour the name and memory of the heroic benefactor of Africa, the plan was conceived in Scotland of taking up the abandoned mission work on Lake Nyassa as a memorial more fitting to Livingstone than any in bronze or marble. The several churches in Scotland combined for this purpose. Wealthy men rallied to support the undertaking, and £12,000 were speedily subscribed. Mr. E. D. Young, B.A., who had served on the east coast, who had been with Livingstone on the Zambesi, and who had also successfully conducted the Search Expedition to Nyassa in 1867, was selected to lead forth and plant the "Livingstonia" Mission of the Free Church on Lake Nyassa. A small steamer was carefully constructed, in steel plates, by Mr. Yarrow, of the Isle of Dogs, and named the *Ilala*, but so constructed that she could be taken to pieces and conveyed in sections, not too heavy for a man's burden, past the cataracts and up the rough ascent which divides the Lower from the Upper Shiré. On their way to their destination, Mr. Young and the mission party visited Mrs. Livingstone's grave on the Zambesi, and also that of the good Bishop Mackenzie on the Shiré. Both are carefully tended and respected by the natives. On the 5th September, 1875, they reached Chibisa's, near to the foot of the cataracts, the spot occupied by the Universities' Mission between the years 1862 and 1864, and which they found all but deserted. By the willing aid of the Makololo,* the *Ilala* was transported to the Upper Shiré, reconstructed, and on the 9th October was held ready for Lake Nyassa. The entrance into the lake Mr. Young thus describes:—

"It was a lovely morning, and with a gentle breeze our beautiful craft rode over the swell as the great blue waters of Nyassa received the first steamer that ever entered upon an African lake. It was a moment of great excitement and of great thankfulness. I, out of the fulness of my heart, said, 'God speed you!' and the 'Amen' of my comrades was a deep and sincere one. We sang a hymn together, and then held Divine service. In

* The Makololo tribe had its habitat on the Zambesi, near the Victoria Falls. In the service of Dr. Livingstone a number of these people came with him to the Shiré. Trained, armed with guns, and brave, some of them afterwards, on the breaking up of the Manganja power, through tribal wars and slave hunting, became chiefs in the new country. Slaving was altogether forbidden by them, and, as a consequence, their numbers increased until they became a powerful and confident tribe. Mr. Young did good service by effecting a reconciliation between the Makololo and Maviti. The Mission was also, he informs us, the means of stopping a great war between the Makololo and the Ajawa, who afterwards became good friends.

good health, without a mishap, welcomed from the Kongoné to the lake, known as well-wishers to all, believed to be the friends of the oppressed and a cause of trepidation to the slave-traders, above all, permitted to carry to a successful issue the darling plan of one from whose courage the idea had dawned, and in memory of whom 'Livingstonia' was now almost an accomplished fact, who among us could help feeling the sacred breath of a blessing upon him in such an hour?"

A settlement was made at Cape Maclear, and on the 18th October, 1875, the first tent of "Livingstonia" was erected.

Before leaving Nyassa and committing the mission to other hands, Mr. Young determined to circumnavigate the lake. Steaming along the eastern shore, he came to the Arab settlement of Loseewa, the point for which the dhows make in running cargoes of slaves from the western side at Kota-Kota. Here two large and crowded villages give every evidence of a brisk and prosperous trade. Steaming away to the northern extremity, not visited by Livingstone, but whose mountain ranges he saw in the far distance, the Ilala passed an iron-bound coast. "The mountain ranges," says Mr. Young, "which had ever been on the right and left, assumed in the case of the eastern one an aspect of the most stupendous magnificence. Never in my life did I feel the spirit of awe and the appreciation of one's own nothingness so palpably as when the vast chain of mountains hung over the dark blue depth we were navigating. The mountains come sheer down into the water like a wall. At a guess I should give them an altitude of 8,000 feet above the level of the lake; but there are peaks which must reach from 10,000 to 12,000 feet at the very least. In memory of my old chief, and in fond recollection of all which he has done to dispel false assumptions respecting Africa, and to point out to men her title to real beauty and magnificence, I named the north-east range the 'Livingstone Mountains.'"

An immense swampy marsh appears to form the northern limit of Lake Nyassa. There is here no inflowing river; on the contrary, if native testimony may be trusted, a considerable river leads away from the lake in a northerly direction. Running down the west coast, the crew of the Ilala were struck with the surpassing loveliness of the scenery. "As we rounded headland after headland, it seemed as if we must come upon some grand castle, so exquisitely was every little plain laid out by Nature's hands. Game of all kinds would look at us with more or less astonishment, and great herds of antelopes just raised their heads and went on browsing."

The circumnavigation of the lake accomplished, the Ilala re-entered the excellent harbour of Livingstonia. It was found that Nyassa extended one hundred miles farther north than Livingstone had imagined, thus bringing the north end of the lake by that distance so much nearer the south end of Lake Tanganyika. Before Mr. Young left Nyassa the Livingstonia Mission was reinforced by the arrival of Dr. James Stewart, formerly the head of the Lovedale College, South Africa, with a party of missionaries. With them arrived also Mr. H. B. Cotterill, a son of the Bishop of Edinburgh. Mr. Cotterill's design was to trade with the natives. "I had read," he said, "with horror the descriptions given by Dr. Livingstone of that terrible scourge of Africa, the slave trade; and I made up my mind to follow out his idea of attempt-

ing to plant in Central Africa a germ of legitimate trade, which might serve as an antidote to the illegal traffic in men." Provided with a stock of goods, and having with him a steel boat, the Herga, presented to him by his old masters and schoolfellows of Harrow School, Mr. Cotterill, aided largely by Mr. Young and the Ilala, reached in safety the sheltered harbour of Livingstonia. He opened business first with Mponda, a well-known chief on the Shiré, and afterwards devoted himself to combined trading and exploring on the lake. Mponda, though friendly to the missionaries, is in the hands of the Arabs; he abets them in their slaving operations, and sells slaves himself. "I want goods," he said to Mr. Young, "and I can only get goods by selling slaves." Of the other powerful chiefs on Nyassa, the same may be said; they are enriched by traffic with the slavers. To make a legitimate commerce more profitable than slave dealing, is to give a deadly blow to the vile system. Mr. Cotterill's attempt, therefore, to introduce lawful commerce on Nyassa, deserves grateful recognition from every philanthropist.

Captain Elton, British Consul at Mozambique, having visited Nyassa, and desirous of returning by a land route to the east coast, Mr. Cotterill agreed to travel with him from the northern end of the lake to Dar-es-Salaam, or some point near to Zanzibar. In company with Dr. Stewart and Dr. Laws of the mission staff, the travellers voyaged in the Ilala to the north end of the lake. They parted with their friends and landed at Malisaka, a village of the Wachunga, an entirely naked tribe. Then ascending the Chombaka valley, they crossed the continuation of the Livingstone range, stretching northwards of Nyassa, the native name of which is Kondi. "The slopes and hills in Kondi," says Mr. Cotterill, "are extensively cultivated, the beauty and fertility of the whole country far surpassing anything that I have seen elsewhere in Africa. The cool mountain air was most refreshing; the grassy slopes, rushing streams, the herds of cattle with their tinkling bells, the wild flowers—forget-me-nots, buttercups, and many old familiar friends—made it like a dream of Switzerland."

After a long and toilsome march nearly due north, and after meeting many obstacles from the warlike natives, Captain Elton and Mr. Cotterill and their companions reached the Ujiji and Zanzibar caravan road at Usekhe, in Ugogo. Here Captain Elton died from the effects of malarious fever. The death of such a man in the prime of life, and in the midst of an active and useful career, is a heavy loss alike to the public service on the east coast of Africa, and to geographical science. Bereft of their leader, the survivors traversed 350 miles eastwards, and at length reached the coast, having travelled in all about 1,000 miles from Livingstonia in four months and a half. A paper, describing this journey through a before unknown region, was read in March last by Mr. Cotterill, to the Royal Geographical Society.

On the return voyage of the Ilala from the north end of Nyassa, an excellent harbour was discovered on the western side, which may soon be made available as a starting-point for Lake Tanganyika. The distance between Tanganyika and Nyassa is not more than some ten or twelve days' journey. One of the objects of the African Expedition, under Mr. Keith Johnson, organised by the African Committee of the Royal Geographical Society, and which has just left England, is to explore the important region between

the two great lakes. The expedition will proceed along the road partly made from Dar-es-Salaam to the north end of Lake Nyassa. Farther south Dr. Stewart and Dr. Laws discovered two more good harbours, so that now the lake may be circumnavigated and good anchorage found every night. An exploration was also made for 100 miles through a new and fine stretch of country north of Kota-Kota. The missionary explorers were visited by a number of the dreaded Mazitu, or Maviti tribe, when an interesting circumstance occurred. Some of them came on board the steamer. A Kaffir from Lovedale belonging to the mission party happening to have his Bible with him, opened it, and read to them the parable of the "Prodigal Son." It was evident that the Zulu visitors understood him, and immediately began to talk about the old Zulu-land in a very familiar way. These fierce Zulus are the great disturbers of the western side, and it will be the aim of the missionaries to secure their friendship.

Besides the Livingstonia Mission on Nyassa, the Established Church of Scotland has founded a mission station, named "Blantyre," after the birthplace of Dr. Livingstone, 3,000 feet above the sea, in the highlands east of the Shiré river, three days' march from Lake Shirwa, and two from the point on the river where navigation commences above the falls. Members of the Universities' Mission have also travelled from the east coast, and visited the inland chiefs towards the head-waters of the Rovuma. Bishop Steere, when Mr. Young was in Nyassa, made his way to Mataka's, a powerful Waiyau chief located some twenty miles from the eastern shore of the lake.

The same mission has now a settlement at Msasi, north of the Rovuma.

Dr. James Stewart, who left Nyassa in November, 1877, on a visit to England, has given hopeful accounts of the progress of the Livingstonia Mission up to the time of his departure. All the members of the permanent staff are two-handed men—artisans as well as missionaries—and are at the same time earnest, practical, and hard-working, and have thoroughly at heart the real and ultimate objects of the mission. Direct missionary work is carried on both on Sundays and week-days. There is a thriving school, with an attendance of about thirty-two. The boys, among whom are sons of the Makololo chiefs, take their share in industrial out-door labour. Much useful work has been done in carpentry, and also in agriculture. It is, however, proposed to change the site of the mission from Cape Maclean to some point on the western shore. Although the harbour is good, the present site has otherwise proved unsuitable for the great end in view. The position is not high enough, the soil is poor, and the area too small to sustain a large permanent population. There is besides no permanent stream near the station, and therefore no means of irrigation, and, worst of all, there exists the tsetse, that minute but formidable foe to the progress of civilisation in certain parts of Africa. The Blantyre station possesses, on the other hand, an incomparable site, on a high and cool position, and with abundance of excellent soil and timber. A small permanent stream runs close to the station, and iron in the immediate neighbourhood, of good quality, is easily accessible by the simplest digging. Houses, workshops, and schools have been erected, and the population in the surrounding district is entirely friendly. The work at Blantyre has been helped forward by the staff of Livingstonia.

Lake Nyassa bids fair to be the scene not only of successful missionary effort, but of fresh attempts to open up trade with the natives. It is proposed to place on its waters for this express purpose one or more large sailing vessels. The ships will be constructed at Quillimane, and taken in sections to be rebuilt on the lake. There is now greater facility of access; a road has been constructed by Mr. James Stewart, c.e., of the Livingstonia Mission, past the cataracts, and the Makololo chiefs, the friends of the missionaries, provide able and willing porters. On the Upper Nile a great success has quite lately been obtained by the employment of Asiatic elephants as burden-bearers in the work of exploration. It remains to be seen whether the difficulties of the Shiré route may not be most successfully overcome by the introduction of these more powerful auxiliaries.

It would gladden the heart of Dr. Livingstone could he see how his ideas on behalf of the Africans are being practically carried out and his hopes realised, not only in the region of Nyassa, but in other places in Africa. Every leading nation in Europe is now taking an active part in opening up the long-closed continent. The explorer will be followed by the missionary and the trader.* The sentiments and modes of civilised life will slowly and gradually be felt and prevail, and the traffic in human beings in no long time become a thing of the past. Such results may be fairly anticipated if we look at the rapid progress of discovery, and at what may be further accomplished by continuous and extended exploration. The opinion of Sir Rutherford as to the great future in store for Africa we have already quoted in these papers. And here we may, in conclusion, repeat words lately addressed by the same eminent authority to the Royal Geographical Society: "I am impressed," said Sir Rutherford, "with the conviction that since the maritime discoveries of the fifteenth century opened a new route to India and China, and revealed a new world, there has not been so magnificent a field as Africa now presents, not only for geographical research, but for enterprise of every kind, and for philanthropic labours."

J. H.

ENGLISH FOLK-LORE.

THE ROBIN.

THE little robin-redbreast is a general favourite with us all, and at no season more than in winter time, when, on the snow-clad ground, he, apparently nipped with cold, hops from door to door, and pitifully begs for a few crumbs of bread, which touching appeal is seldom made without a quick response. Of the many associations that cluster round the robin, one of the earliest is to be found in the ancient legend which Bishop Doane, of New Jersey, has prettily embodied in the following lines:—

"Sweet Robin, I have heard them say
That thou wert there upon the day
That Christ was crowned in cruel scorn,
And bore away one bleeding thorn ;

* In the "Sunday at Home" for November, 1877, there is a map of the great lake region of Africa, showing the places already occupied by the different Missionary Societies.

That so the blush upon thy breast
In shameful sorrow was imprest,
And thence thy genial sympathy
With our redeem'd humanity.
Sweet Robin! would that I might be
Bathed in my Saviour's blood like thee;
Bear in my breast, what'er the loss,
The bleeding blazon of the cross;
Live ever with thy loving mind
In fellowship with humankind;
And take my pattern still from thee,
In gentleness and constancy."

It is nearly everywhere considered unlucky to kill a robin, and in Cornwall boys are wont to exclaim,—

"Who hurts the robin and the wren,
Will never prosper, sea or land."

In Yorkshire, if a robin is killed, it is supposed that one of the cows belonging to the person, or family of the person, who killed it will give "bloody milk." A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" has related some facts bearing upon this, and vouches implicitly for their accuracy and truth. This superstition is not confined to our own country, but is prevalent in the greater part of Switzerland, and on this account, we are informed, the robin alone of all birds enjoys perfect immunity from the gun of the Alpine herdsman. Grimm informs us that in Germany reverence is paid the robin, and he refers to its colours and name as evidences that it was sacred to Thor, the god of lightning. In France, too, the robin generally meets with mercy and kindness at the hands of the sportsman, and in some parts it is even almost looked upon with veneration. Pote, in his "Ode to the Robin" (1780, p. 27), alludes to the ill-luck that attends any who may hurt it:—

"For ever from his threshold fly,
Who, void of honour, once shall try,
With bare inhospitable breast,
To bar the freedom of his guest;
Oh, rather seek the peasant's shed,
For he will give thee wasted bread,
And fear some new calamity,
Should any there spread snares for thee."

A correspondent of Chambers's "Book of Days" (vol. i. p. 678) has the following curious note on this subject:—"How badly you write!" I once said to a boy in our parish school; 'your hand shakes so much that you can't hold the pen steady. Have you been running hard or anything of that sort?' 'No,' replied the lad, 'it always shakes; I once had a robin die in my hand, and they say that if a robin dies in your hand it will always shake.'

In Scotland, and also in some parts of Ireland, the song of the robin is thought to bode ill-luck to the sick person who hears it, and much uneasiness is consequently caused when its notes, or "weeping," are heard near a house where any one happens to be sick. In the north of Devon, when a robin perches on the top of a cottage and utters its plaintive "weet," it is believed that the baby in the house will shortly die. It is regarded, too, as most ominous for a robin-redbreast to fly in at an open window into a sick room. Mr. FitzPatrick, in his "Life, Times, and Correspondence of Bishop Doyle" (vol. ii. p. 496), says, speaking of the death of Dr. Doyle:—"Considering that the season was midsummer and not winter, the visit of two robin-redbreasts to the

sick room may be noticed as interesting. They remained fluttering round, and sometimes perching on the uncurtained bed. The priests, struck by the novelty of the circumstance, made no effort to expel the little visitors; and the robins hung lovingly over the bishop's head, until death released him." A short time ago the writer of these pages was told by a friend who had lately lost a relative, that during the night in which she died several taps were heard at the window. The next morning, on the ground beneath, three robin-redbreasts were found dead, having died of the bruises they had received in knocking their heads against the window.

There is a pretty Welsh legend connected with the robin, which, says a correspondent of "Notes and Queries," makes not only the babes in the wood, but mankind at large, indebted to these deserving favourites. How could any child help regarding with grateful veneration the little bird with bosom red, when assured that "far, far, far away is a land of woe, darkness, spirits of evil, and fire? Day by day this little bird carries in his bill a drop of water to quench the flame. So near the burning stream does he fly, that his dear little feathers are scorched; and hence he is named 'Bron-thuddyn' (breast-burnt). To serve little children, the robin dares approach the infernal pit. No good child will hunt the devoted benefactor of man. The robin returns from the land of fire, and therefore he feels the cold of winter more than his brother birds. He shivers in the brumal blast; hungry he chirps from door to door." According to the popular legend the robin and the wren are said to cover with leaves or moss any dead bodies they may chance to find unburied, a belief which no doubt to a great degree found its origin in the old ballad of "The Children in the Wood," wherein occurs the following stanza:—

"And when they were dead,
The robins so red
Brought strawberry leaves,
And over them spread."

This idea is alluded to in Reed's old Plays:—

"Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men."

And again, thus pathetically, by Drayton:—

"Covering with moss the dead's unclosed eye,
The little redbreast teacheth charitie."

There are numerous rhymes respecting the robin, which, by-the-bye, generally include the wren, the martin, and the swallow; these, too, are common in all parts of the country. It is a popular notion that the wren is the wife of the robin. Thus in Warwickshire it is said:—

"The robin and the wren
Are the Almighty's cock and hen;
The martin and the swallow
Are the Almighty's bow and arrow."

The robin is not altogether without its weather-lore, for in Ireland, should it enter a house, it is said to prognosticate hard weather, snow and frost. In Devonshire it often goes by the name of "Farewell, Summer."

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MOTHER'S MAGNETISM.

[After Berceuse.]

THE BICYCLE IN PICARDY AND NORMANDY.

BY A MEMBER OF THE WANDERERS' BICYCLE CLUB.

TEN years ago, in the "Leisure Hour" for May, 1869, a writer remarks, "We shall not be astonished to find that this most economical of all mounts, improved by French ingenuity, and favoured, as it is, by the nature of the soil, obtains a permanent position among French people." Among the English, but not the French, the bicycle has now a recognised status, and, with its riders, penetrates far and wide. I purpose therefore to give a few particulars of a tour enjoyed by myself and steed in France during the past summer.

Making Boulogne the starting-place for the Picardy portion of my trip, I started thence on Thursday, 12th September last, at 11.30; and after experiencing a very rough and hilly French road, arrived at Pont de Briques, five miles,* a curious little village with a large mill and very old parish church. The right-hand road must be taken here, and after surmounting several hills, Neufchâtel is reached. This pleasant little place forms a junction of roads to Sanier, Lille, St. Omer, and other places, and, there being no signpost, I was for a short time uncertain of my way; an intelligent peasant presently set me right, and I was soon bowling merrily along to Etaples, my road being by the side of the sea the whole distance. This town is very ancient, and now almost in ruins, but is very clean, and possesses an interesting cemetery. The ideas of the natives about my bicycle were most ludicrous. While I left it outside a *café* here, a crowd came up to examine it, standing, however, at a respectful distance; at length one of them ventured to touch it, but quickly withdrew his finger, as though he expected it to make a snap at him. From Etaples to Montreuil the road follows the left bank of the Canche river, and the scenery is very picturesque. Montreuil is situated on a hill, and is remarkable for a lofty flamboyant church with a magnificent west door under the towers. Hence to Campagne and Creçy the road passes through very pretty country, teeming with life. I was much interested in the battle-field, where, in 1346, Edward III completely routed Philippe de Valois of France. Even to my inexperienced eyes the place seemed exactly suited for a battle-field. The windmill whence Edward watched the contest is still in existence. An easy ride brought me to Abbeville, seventy miles, an ancient fortified town on the River Somme. The Gothic church of St. Wulfran is very fine, with façade and portals richly sculptured. The Hôtel de Ville, an extremely ancient edifice, possesses a belfry of the thirteenth century. L'Hospice des Enfants Trouvés is a handsome modern building, and the house of Francis I has a very richly carved staircase. The town was occupied by the Germans in 1870-1, and the landlady of the hotel where I stopped (Hôtel de France) said that they ate up everything in the place and occupied every bed in the town; "but," she added, generously, "they paid me well for everything they had."

From Abbeville the route pursued is by Pont Remy, noted for its ancient castle; thence to Longpré the road is most excellent. This pretty and pic-

turesque little village is resorted to in the summer by many Parisians, and, as I was informed, by a few English families. Before reaching Hangest, a capital view is obtained of the Camp l'Etoile, an old Roman fort. Picquigny, ninety-two miles, is famous in history as the place where Louis XI and Edward IV met to sign the treaty named after the place. The distrust of both monarchs was so great that a barrier of strong wooden palisades was placed between them, and they shook hands through a small chink in the woodwork. No wonder that a peace thus cordially concluded did not last very long. Close to the curious old church is the ruined castle, where the French king took up his quarters on the occasion. Hence to Ailly, and Amiens, 101 miles, is a capital road. Amiens, one of the most interesting towns in France, is capital of the department of Somme, and has several fine streets, containing some handsome shops. There is plenty here to interest the traveller: the fine old cathedral, with its carved west front and magnificent nave; the church of St. Jacques; the Musée Napoleon; the Hôtel de Ville, built by Henry IV; the public library of nearly 60,000 volumes; the Palais de Justice, the Corn Market, and the boulevards and public gardens. M. Gambetta descended here in the balloon in which he escaped from Paris during the war. From Amiens to Hébecourt and Flers, the road lies through extremely pretty country, and after passing through a grove of firs three miles long, reaches Breteuil, 126 miles, a very funny old place, with a church dating from before the Conquest, and, to all appearances, before the days of Julius Cæsar. The clock (with both hands missing) is certainly the most ludicrous timepiece I have ever seen. Hence to Wavignies, St. Just, and Clermont, 152 miles, the road is very hilly, and travelling rather slow. This pretty little town is situate on the slope of a hill, crowned by the castle, now, by the way, used as a female penitentiary. Cassini, the astronomer, was born here.

The road from here to Paris being reported as very bad, and almost unridable, I took train to the metropolis, where I intended staying some time.

After seeing the Exhibition and numerous lions of the French capital, I started one fine morning for St. Germain, fifteen miles, the greater part of which distance I had to walk, as it is paved most of the way. I was much interested in inspecting the large works used to pump up water to Versailles through an aqueduct about eight miles long. The burial-place of James II of England is here, also a very fine château, the terrace of which, on the borders of the Seine, commands a most extensive view. Poissy, twenty miles, is a small town situate at one of the extreme points of the forest of St. Germain, on the left bank of the Seine. It was the birthplace of St. Louis, who was baptized in the ancient parish church, in a font which was shown to me. Here I left the main road, and journeyed through the most lovely scenery to Mantes, forty miles, a very handsome town, situate in one of the most beautiful parts of the Seine valley, and called "La Jolie," or pretty. The cathedral of Notre Dame (much resembling its Paris namesake) is an elegant Gothic building, built for Blanche of Castile,

* The distances are all measured from Boulogne.

and her son St. Louis, with its triple portal, tall square towers, and delicate choir. The beautiful tower of St. Madou, the only remains of a church of that name, and the Hôtel de Ville, are well worth seeing. Here William the Norman received the injury which terminated his life a few days afterwards. From Mantes to Vernon the road runs through most charming scenery, the River Seine being to the right, and lofty limestone cliffs, sometimes covered with vegetation, and at others frowning naked, on the left. At a village five miles from Vernon is an old church with fine stained glass.

The vineyards are very fine about here, and, with the owners' permission, I frequently enjoyed a luscious bunch of grapes. Vernon is a beautifully-situated town, with narrow streets and timber-framed houses, making a very picturesque appearance. The church, in the main street of the town, is a very fine edifice. The stone bridge over the Seine, Museum, and Hôtel Dieu, are very interesting objects. A capital road brings one to Gaillon, a town on the side of a hill, with a large prison, commanding one of the most beautiful views in France, on the top. A short distance outside Gaillon, the magnificent ruin of the Château Gaillard rises on a lofty rock, at whose base flows the River Seine. This was the favourite castle of Richard Cœur de Lion. Still farther on a solitary tower stands wreathed in ivy, and visible from a great distance; it was probably one of the towers of the exterior wall of the château. To Vaudreuil and Pont de l'Arche the road runs through very pretty country, and on to Rouen, ninety-one miles, on the top of the cliffs, the country, spread out like a map all round, shows, by the smoke lazily curling upward, where many a country village lies nestling amidst the trees. Rouen, a fine old Gothic town, the ancient capital of Normandy, is replete with objects of interest. Some relic of antiquity here meets the visitor at every turn. The mouldering magnificence of the Cathedral and Palais de Justice carries the imagination half-a-dozen centuries back. The Cathedral has lately received the addition of a fine iron spire; some splendid monuments are found within its walls. St. Ouen is a magnificent church, and some statues of the saints are now being put up. Other churches are St. Maclou, famous for its lace-like front, St. Patrice, and St. Vincent. The Palais de Justice is an extremely fine building, possessing a magnificent hall, 110 feet long. There are many other rooms, also, which are very fine. The Place de la Pucelle, with a statue of Joan of Arc, the Hôtel de Ville, and other objects tempt a prolonged stay. There is a handsome suspension bridge across the Seine. Leaving Rouen, a hill of nearly two miles has to be climbed, from the top of which a glorious view of the city is obtained, forming the finest panorama I have ever seen. A charming ride brought me to Duclair, a clean little river-side village, and Candebee, where a village fair was going on. The scene was really most laughable; cocoa-nut throwing seems to obtain as large a share of popular favour here as in England.

Between Rouen and Havre the agriculture of Normandy is seen to advantage. The land laughs with its plenty. The villages twinkle in the fat valleys, and seem to be literally surfeited with produce. The gardens climb every hill; every field is lively with cattle, every stream murmurs over mill-wheels. All the cottages breathe an air of comfort, but the plan of cultivation is very different to

that pursued in England. The land is divided into small farms of from eight to twelve acres, and anything above that is considered a large holding; the consequence is a very parti-coloured appearance, owing to the spaces allotted to the various crops being so very small. As a result, nothing like the full value is obtained from the land, and while we in England, with our high farming, frequently obtain forty bushels of corn to the acre, the rule in Normandy is from sixteen to twenty; and yet the soil is everywhere equal, and in many parts superior, to that of our wheat-growing districts. It will, indeed, be many years before much change for the better takes place, for the peasantry, though not exactly ignorant, are quite content to go on in the slow manner of their fathers, and are very loth to take to improvements either in machinery or mode of cultivation. Some of the larger landowners have certainly imported English machinery, and are doing their best to instruct the people in more modern principles of farming, and to such must we look to bring out the vast resources of this fertile land.

The next place is Lillebonne, a venerable old town, with the remains of a Roman theatre and a ruined castle. St. Romain, a few miles farther on, is also an interesting village, with a handsome Hôtel de Ville. Harfleur is next reached, formerly the chief port of Normandy, but now an insignificant village, with an interesting church of the fifteenth century, surmounted by a spire and ornamented with a fringed portal. A down-hill road now brings me to Havre, 144 miles, one of the principal seaports of France, and a very thriving commercial town. The church of Notre Dame is fine in the interior, and that of St. Ingouville should be visited. The Hôtel de Ville, with its spacious gardens, is a large and handsome edifice. The Palais de Justice, Aquarium, Museum, and Government barracks are the principal remaining objects of interest.

With this, the end of the most pleasant holiday I have ever spent, I must bid adieu to my readers, advising those who are riders of the steel horse to follow in some degree my example. C. R. M.

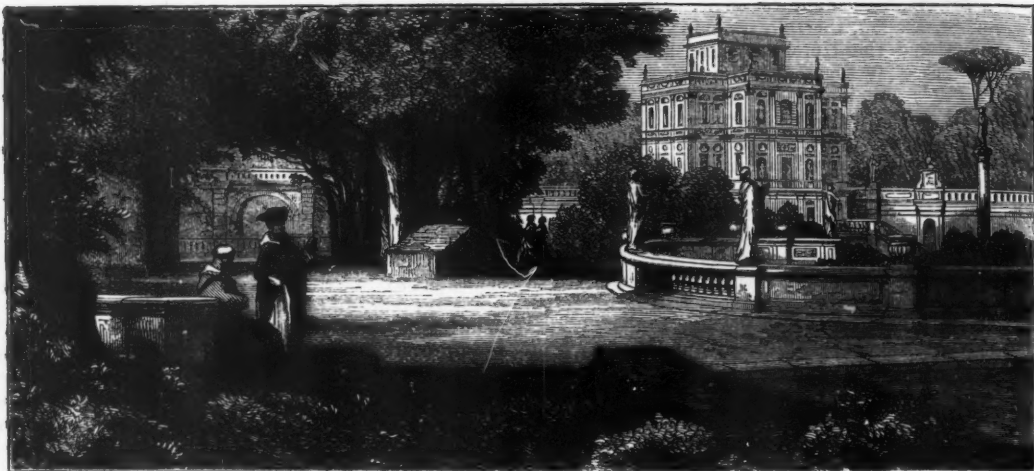


Night.

THE night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.*

* From "Among the Flowers and other Poems." By Francis W. Bourdillon. (Marcus Ward.)



THE BAMBINO:

AN ITALIAN CHRISTMAS STORY FOR THE YOUNG.

IT was Christmas Eve. Not the Christmas we English picture to ourselves, all frost and snow and bare trees and howling winds outside, with comfort and mirth and plum-pudding inside. In Italy the picture is reversed. The olive-trees are well covered with leaves and the fruit is not all gathered. Roses still bloom, the sky is cloudless, and the sunshine so bright and warm that the old people creep out of their cottage doors to bask in it, and forget the squalid misery within.

One old woman, occupied in spinning wool on a distaff, was sitting on the top of the flight of outside steps which led to the upper floor of a cottage. The ground floor had been appropriated to the pig lately sold, and in more prosperous days to the cow and calf; but now all the live stock was represented by a hen, which wandered about in fruitless search of food amongst the dry husks of the Indian corn. The patch of ground in front of the house contained a few vegetables interspersed with weeds, an olive-tree now despoiled of all its fruit, an almond and a fig-tree, up which last a vine had been trained, and it once had borne many bunches of fine grapes, but now it lay trailing its length upon the ground. How many luxuries had not that patch of ground once supplied! The Indian corn flourished all round the roots of that fig-tree and vine without diminishing the luxuriance of either. Some of the household linen had existed there in its first form as the pretty feathery flax with its blue flower, and up the trelliswork of cane which enclosed the little property once clambered roses and gorgeous convolvuluses, well trained and cared for. La Vecchia—that is the name by which the old woman had been called since she attained the dignity of great-grandmother—La Vecchia sighed as she reflected on all the departed glories. Yes, even her velvet bodice—real velvet that had descended to her from her grandmother—the rich embroidery on her chemise, the coral necklace, the massive earrings, and the rings with which her shrivelled fingers were laden—these things all proved that she had seen better days, and that she belongs quite to the peasant aristocracy.

"Nonna!" called a voice from within, a little querulous voice—"Nonna!"

"What is it, cocco (a term of endearment)? Is not the mamma there?"

"Yes, but I want La Nonna to come and talk to me about the Bambino Gesù. I want him to come and make me well."

"Gionchetto (plaything)!" exclaimed the Nonna, stirred to the very depths of her heart, as she hastened to the side of the

bed and kissed the little wasted child who lay thereon. "Gionchetto, he will come; he will come and make thee well."

But as she spoke the tears ran down her cheeks, and she glanced half reproachfully at the crucifix and the print of the Virgin and Child at the head of the bed. There were many sacred prints nailed upon the walls, and one or two crucifixes, with wreaths of faded flowers hung over them, supposed to show the piety of the family. There was a carved oaken chest and two chairs to correspond—handsome furniture ill-accommodating with the many signs of abject poverty, and giving unmistakable evidence of well-to-do peasant ancestry. A young woman was busy in extracting from the wooden chest, first, a blue stuff gown, which she proceeded to put on, and with a turn of her hand drew up and knotted above her short white linen petticoats—one may well put the plural number, for she had on about a dozen. Then she drew forth a pair of blue woollen stockings and thick shoes, in which she proceeded to encase her bare legs and feet. Two gay crimson and yellow kerchiefs, one for the head and one for the neck, completed the costume, and as she dressed she tried to soothe the peevish child with cheerful conversation.

"And is not la mamma going to the midnight mass with Babbo to see the beautiful *presepio*? Dost remember last year, Giacomino? Thou wert a little thing, and Babbo held thee up to see the beautiful wax baby lying in the manger with candles all round, and flowers, and the blessed Virgin in a lovely dress of blue silk with pearls."

"Yes, I remember! I remember!" cried the sick child, his pale face flushing with excitement; "and the little sheep and the big flowers. Oh! it was beautiful; and will it really be as fine this year?"

"Finer still, they say. There's a gilt cradle and the Holy Mother in red satin with silver embroidery; but here comes Babbo."

Nunzia left off in her description hastily, and looked up at the figure of a man in the doorway suddenly darkening the room. "Babbo, be quick and go," was the only greeting the little invalid bestowed upon his father. "Be quick and send the Bambino Gesù here to make me well."

"Yes, let us go, Pasquale," said the mother. "I am ready, and we must be in Magliano before nightfall."

"Yes; go to midnight mass and pray the Holy Virgin to send the Bambino. Women believe in those miracles!" growled Pasquale.

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He was a tall, black-browed man, with a surly but not altogether a forbidding countenance.

"Not believe! May thy blasphemies be forgiven thee, Pasquale," cried the Nonna, making the sign of the cross. "Why, was there not Battista's aunt had a child saved by a miracle? Did not the priest bring the Bambino all in wax to the babe's bedside, and did it not immediately—"

"Yes, yes; we have heard that story often enough, Nonna mia, and I am not saying it may not all be true; but if you ask me what I think would do Giacomino more good than all the priests and all the Bambinos in the world, I tell you, good wine and good wheat-bread, not this stuff"—taking up a little morsel of a loaf of Indian corn that lay on the bed—"and strong soup, that's what he wants. And whose fault is it that he has not got it?"

"Why, your *own*, Pasquale!" returned the grandmother, boldly. "The padrone would have given you work, and he would have given the child soup if you had asked him."

"Hush! Nonna," whispered Nunzia, tremblingly. "You know it is of no use saying that; don't make him angry."

"I work for the padrone! I!" shouted Pasquale Alici; "after all the names he has called me—after the insults he has showered on me. I, who have tilled my own land, like my grandfather and my great-grandfather. I can count a longer pedigree than he, this new-comer, this upstart. Cursed be the day I ever sold myself to work for hire! But I have paid him now! I have paid him! We are quits, and he has asked me for my work, and I have refused it."

"More shame to you, wooden head!" retorted La Vecchia. "You have starved your only son to scrape together that five hundred francs the padrone didn't want, to gratify your own stupid obstinacy, and may you rue the consequences! Fool! idiot! blockhead! Oh, I am not afraid," continued the spirited little old woman, in answer to an appealing look from the younger one, and an ominous cloud on Pasquale's brow. "You are my grandson, and I first rolled you up in your swaddling clothes, as I did your father before you."

"Zitta (silence), you old hag, or I'll knock all your remaining teeth down your throat!" exclaimed the infuriated man, clenching his fist.

La Vecchia retired muttering to the window. Giacomino began to cry, and Nunzia, seizing the arm of her husband, succeeded in dragging him out.

The Nonna, noways discomposed at the somewhat disrespectful manner of her grandson, lit the oil-lamp, placed it on one of the wooden chairs, and began to soothe the sobbing child, whose thoughts soon reverted to the Bambino.

"When they have got to Magliano they will send him, Nonna!"

"Yes; but it is a long way off."

"And will he come out of his gold cradle to a poor room like this?"

"Oh, yes! he is so good; he loves the poor better than the rich; but he will not come whilst you keep awake," continued La Nonna, diplomatically. "The Bambino comes and kisses little children in their sleep, and they wake up quite well."

"I will go to sleep, but I am hungry. Will the Bambino bring wheaten bread?" was his last question as the grandmother gave him the yellow scrap so disparagingly remarked upon by his father.

It comforted the little fellow, however. Whilst gnawing his crust he fell asleep, and dreamed probably of the Bambino.

La Vecchia walked to the little window at the back, from which she could watch the goings on at the casino of Count Grazielli. It was situated on the summit of the hill, under the steep incline of which our cottage nestled but a few hundred yards beneath. Dancing and feasting were going on amongst the servants and dependants. There were many lights and shouts of merriment. Count Grazielli, though stern, was a liberal master and a real philanthropist, but he did not understand the people amongst whom he had come to live, nor they him.

Pasquale Alici had had misfortunes with his corn, and his cow had just died, when the new signor, a widower, came to live upon his property. Count Grazielli very generously advanced the peasant proprietor the sum of 500 francs on the condition that he would give his day's work whenever required. To this Pasquale joyfully consented, and fully meant to keep to his contract; but he had never obeyed anybody in his life. His fiery and independent spirit could not brook the haughty tone of command in which the padrone enforced obedience, nor the rules and restrictions to which he had to submit. He declared he would work no more as a hireling, and refused to obey his next summons. The master, incensed, called him a thief, a cheat, and a liar, and threatened him with imprisonment. Pasquale swore he would repay the money advanced him, and the padrone should rue the day on which he had called him a cheat. This was months ago. Pasquale had ruined his property in order to raise money in a hurry, had rushed about the country trying to find a quick market for his corn, his vegetables, his olives, his eggs, his pig; the garden was stripped, and then neglected; his son had been down with ow fever, and could not recover because he was not sufficiently nourished. The whole family were hungry; but he had kept his word; that very morning he had gone up the hill triumphant, to pay his debt.

"I am glad to find you an honest man than I took you for," was all the padrone said, as he counted up the notes; "if you should want work at any time, and will take a lesson from what has occurred, be more obedient and less independent, I should be glad to employ you."

"I work no more for hire; I am no slave, and never will be one," replied Pasquale.

"Just as you please," returned the gentleman, with a sneer; "but you are rather foolish, my friend. Things don't seem to be prospering much with you down there."

"As well, may be, as they will prosper with you up here," returned Alici, with a dark significance, as he walked away.

Pasquale Alici was one of those men who are capable of being both very bad and very good, and on a trifling accident may depend whether the good or the evil impulse shall predominate.

La Vecchia was of opinion that pride and temper, however much indulged in at home or amongst equals, were quite out of place in dealings with the signori. Signori were beings of a different species as far removed from the "contadini" as if they lived in another planet. They were strange, powerful, capricious creatures, who required to be humoured and flattered. There was no harm in cheating them a little, but insisting on your rights, showing temper, that was madness; and now, as she gazed on the lights and listened to the music of three fiddles from Magliano, and heard the shouting and merriment, and saw the dancing figures looking weird in the lurid light of a bonfire they had kindled, she could have found it in her heart to curse her grandson, who might have been there, eating and drinking and dancing with the rest, and she, too, might have eaten her fill, which she had not done for many a long day, poor Nonna! and might have brought back bread and soup and wine, such as the doctor had ordered for Giacomino. She turned round to look at him. He was peacefully sleeping, but what was it that made the Nonna suddenly drop her distaff, seize her rosary, and fall upon her knees, exclaiming, "Madame santissima! Il Bambino Gesù!" It was the sudden apparition through the open door of a little child—a lovely child, with large, wide-open, blue eyes, rosy lips parted in a beaming smile, and golden hair curling in such clusters round his head, it seemed, by the light of the flickering oil-lamp, like a glory. He wore a blue blouse of the richest velvet; a lace collar fell on his shoulders; in his hands he carried a loaf of white wheaten bread; and going straight to the bedside he gently kissed the sleeping face and deposited the loaf beside it; then turning to the Nonna, put his finger on his lips, and vanished into the darkness.

When Pasquale and his wife returned from their expedition early the next morning they found the grandmother telling her beads with an energy and devoutness such as they had never before witnessed in her. Giacomo still slept, and both exclaimed as they beheld the loaf of white bread,—

"Who has been here? Who brought this?"

"The Bambino Gesù," replied La Vecchia. "He walked in all by himself, and kissed Giacomo; so the child will now recover, blessed be the Holy Virgin—Ave Maria!" and she began again at her rosary.

Annunziata looked awestruck, and was quite ready to believe in the miracle, but Pasquale broke into a rude laugh.

"La Vecchia has been asleep and dreaming. The Bambino must have felt cold. It was kind of him to leave his gold cradle in the church. Why, when the priest brings the Bambino and places it in the children's beds he brings it in a coach and wraps it in a shawl; knowest thou not that, grandmother?"

"I have not been asleep nor dreaming, Pasquale," said La Vecchia, with dignity, "and the Bambino was not cold. The Holy Mother had dressed him in blue velvet, and he had a lace collar on and his shoes."

"Why!" exclaimed Alici, on whom a light seemed to burst, "it was the padroncino. Where did he go, sciocca (fool), and how long ago was it?"

"The master's child! Are you crazy, Pasquale? As if that baby could come here all alone! This was the blessed Bambino, I tell you, and he wore a glory round his head. He appeared suddenly in the room whilst they were still feasting at the casino. He brought the loaf of white bread and put it where you see, then he turned and vanished through the door. I was on my knees, of course, thanking the Holy Mother."

"And you let him go! Alone, down the steps and up the hill? Who knows what mayn't have happened to him!" and Pasquale rushed out.

He hated the count, but loved the count's child, and the thought of that little fellow only three years old venturing down that steep hill alone, and at night, filled him with vague fears. Might he not have fallen and hurt himself, or have lost his way, and even now be wandering about whilst the careless servants, thinking only of their last night's revels, might not even have discovered his absence. The master might not be up. Pasquale hastened towards the great house, his eyes moistening as sayings and doings of the little count rushed to his memory with a new significance. He remembered when he first saw him, but a babe, crowing in the arms of his *balia* (wet-nurse), a buxom peasant woman, who used often to come with her little charge to the cottage under the hill, and gossip with her friend Nunzia. The two babies would play together, and Pasquale thought them alike. In his fatherly pride he imagined any other father could be but flattered to hear his child likened to such a cherub as Giacomo, and he had thought it rather a compliment to the padrone when he remarked on the resemblance between the children; but the master's brow grew dark. He replied, haughtily, that he could see no likeness, and cut short the conversation. In truth it was scarcely flattering to the beautiful delicate-featured little patrician to liken him to the clumsy and broad-featured peasant child. The resemblance existed only in the fond father's imagination.

This was the beginning of misunderstandings. From that time Pasquale hated the padrone and the padrone disliked him; but the children were greater friends every day. Later, when the rupture came, all communication was forbidden between the great house and the cottage. Pasquale had once met the padroncino out with his nurse since then.

"Giacomino! How is he?" asked the little boy, immediately.

"Giacomino is ill," was the sullen answer; "ill and very hungry;" with a resentful glance at the blue velvet costume of the little patrician.

"Giacomino hungry! then why don't we take him bread?" inquired the young count, with a puzzled expression in his round eyes.

"Papa says 'no,'" said the servant.

"But I will," said the child; and Pasquale remembered now that a certain expression of stubborn resolution came over the baby face, which gave it for a moment quite an absurd likeness to that of his father. Yes; he had kept his word, that baby. He had watched his opportunity, and he had come to the rescue of his little friend. If any harm should have happened to him!

Pasquale hastened his steps up the steep slippery path. The padrone was up; he was leaning over his balcony, watching with a keen scrutiny, as was his wont, all the doings of his dependants: the women going down to the well with their pichers on their heads; the sleek cattle of gigantic size being groomed as carefully as horses are here; but there were horses, too, going out for their morning's exercise; the shepherd-boy drove his flock of sheep and goats out to find pasture on the hill, the only place where it could be found. There are no fields as in England; all ploughed and cultivated land, and no green to be seen till the young corn comes up. Still, it was a lovely landscape, with the smiling Adriatic peeping out between the hills, and the snow-clad Apennines bounding the prospect to the west.

Count Grazielli, as Pasquale Alici drew near, inquired, in a tone of cold displeasure, what his business was.

"Your child?" asked the peasant, forgetting his wrongs in his anxiety; "where is he?"

"In bed and asleep."

"Are you sure of that, Signor Conte? Have you seen him there yourself?"

For answer Count Grazielli vanished into the house, and presently returned with a bundle in a shawl, out of which peeped a few golden curls.

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated Pasquale. "I was afraid he might not be able to climb the hill from my cottage and find his way all alone."

"Then you know something of his last night's escapade? You inveigled him down to your cottage!" exclaimed the count, angrily.

"I knew nothing about it. I was at Magliano," returned Pasquale. "I took my wife to pray for my sick child, leaving La Vecchia to look after him; and the poor old *sciocca* thought our prayers were answered, and took him for the Bambino Gesù; so, instead of looking after the child, plump she goes on her knees. But she cannot be blamed for that, poor old thing. She never doubted it was a vision she saw. I did not come back till morning, and when I heard I guessed it all, and I was in such a fright. I came here directly, although I vowed I would never set foot on your land again. But now I would ask you a favour. Let me go up there and take your child in my arms and kiss him and thank him, for he is a noble little fellow."

"Come up," said the padrone in a softened tone.

Pasquale mounted the flight of steps which led to the balcony. The little one now awake, stretched out his arms smiling. Pasquale took him and covered him with kisses.

"My son," said Count Grazielli, still not without displeasure, "do you not know that you did wrong to run away last night?"

An indignant frown settled on the child's face, making him again for the moment the very image of his father. "Giacomino was ill and hungry," said he, "and no one took him bread, so I did."

"Giacomino shall have food and wine and everything to make him well."

"I will take them to him, papa."

"No, my son; you must learn not to disobey me, and I shall not let you take them." Then turning to Alici, "I did not know that your child was ill. What is the matter with him?"

"He had fever in the summer, and he has been wasting ever since. The doctor said he wanted nourishing diet, and I could not give it him."

"Whose fault was it that you could not give it him?" asked the count, coldly.

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"Yours!" returned Pasquale, with flashing eyes. "You tried to make a slave of me; you entrapped me by a contract that I did not understand, and then, to earn my liberty, I have had to starve my child; but if I had lost him I would have been avenged."

"How?" inquired the master, with provoking coolness, "would you have assassinated me?"

"I would," returned Pasquale. "It was so that I had sworn."

A look came over the count's face, not of fear, but of mingled sorrow and anger. "And this is my reward for trying to improve these pig-headed peasants!" he exclaimed. "I have sacrificed time, money, all my inclinations, in the hope of doing some good among this wretched, debased population, and their gratitude is this, that they mean to assassinate me. I will not stay to be stuck like a pig—no; I will leave them to their own devices and return to Rome. Philanthropy is a mistake."

The count was soliloquising. He never dreamt that an ignorant peasant like Pasquale Alici could be capable of understanding him in the slightest degree. Therefore it rather startled him when Alici held out his hand, saying, "I think, perhaps, we have misunderstood each other."

"Yes; and I am afraid that we shall never understand each other any better," he rejoined, haughtily, and without taking the proffered hand.

"Our sons will, perhaps." And his words proved prophetic.

Giacomino got well. Soup and wine and wheaten-bread were brought regularly to the cottage from the great house by the padrone's orders. The padrone himself was no longer there. He returned to Rome with his son and heir, and the casino was shut up for a long, long time. La Vecchia retained to the last full belief in her miracle, and so strong was her faith that it communicated itself to others, and the cottage under the hill is to this day shown as the place where the Bambino came to visit the sick child.

Years after, when the Nonna had long lain in her grave, and Pasquale and Nunzia were an old couple, and Giacomino a big tall man, when Italians of all ranks had learned brotherhood in their struggles for liberty, the young heir came to take possession of his estates. He was a fine young man, with an open brow and curling chestnut air, and the popularity his father never could win was his without an effort. Some say that his plentiful crops and excellent wine are due chiefly to the industry and intelligence of his steward, Giacomino Alici.

M. I. GALLETTI.

Varieties.

RUGBY SCHOOL.—A Rugbeian, who has recently left the school, notes several inaccuracies and omissions in the paper in the October Part. The moat is now filled up. The school chapel has been rebuilt within the last ten years. The Arnold library was built by subscriptions of his pupils as a memorial. Members of the school canoe and row in four oars on the Avon. A large swimming-bath has been built by Dr. Jex-Blake. The Natural History Club, the Observatory, and other institutions might have been dwelt upon, but the writer was limited to space. In the remark as to Rugby rules of football being followed in all schools, the writer meant of course in all schools playing the Rugby and not the Association game.—Another correspondent asks us to substitute "Asylum" instead of "Alms-houses" in the notice of the Journeymen Tailors' Institution on p. 656.—In the paragraph from the "Times" on Earthquakes (p. 640), next year is spoken of, by a curious *lapsus*, as the thousandth anniversary of the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The destruction occurred A.D. 79.

LORD CHELMSFORD.—When I was in a pleader's chambers, now fifty-six or fifty-seven years ago, I remember reading, in some instructions or papers that came into the chambers, an early speech of his at the Bar, soon after his call, humorous and witty, with a quotation from Shakespeare that I yet remember.

It is not of his wit and humour and extraordinary aptness of quotation that I now wish to speak, but of his goodness. Never in my life did I hear a malignant reflection from his lips; and yet he was a man of wit, for many of his good things, some in form but puns, are really full of wit and subtle distinction. Men so gifted are often tempted to say smart things. I should describe him as the most innocuous wit that ever sparkled in my hearing. In every relation of life he was emphatically a good man. During many years of unprosperous political life and strife, I do not recollect having heard him utter an impatient, unthankful, or unbecoming word concerning unpropitious fortune. In his own family, though I am reluctant to pierce those shades, at his own table, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, he was radiantly happy, and presented one of the brightest and sweetest pictures of the head of a family that have fallen under my observation. He was eminently a high-minded gentleman in conduct ever. His legal reading and learning were to my own certain knowledge much more than the world gave him credit for. Lord Justice Turner spoke to me once to this effect, and commended his conduct and judgments in the Chancery. Undoubtedly a Chief Justiceship in a Common Law Court would have been his more appropriate field. He wrote to me when I was in India more than once concerning the fate of an old man at the Bar, upon whom every year that passes is opening the sight of fresh and eager candidates for distinction flying at the old cock of the walk; he wrote without acrimony, yet with a certain pathos. It was not his fate, however, to succumb. He had the unspeakable happiness of seeing worthy descendants, and if not rich in worldly possessions died rich in the best of possessions to bequeath—a good name.—*Sir Laurence Peel.*

ARITHMETICAL SQUARES AND OTHER NUMERICAL PROBLEMS.—We have received so many letters relating to the Arithmetical Problem in our September Part, p. 591, that we must revert to the subject in a separate article. There are many curious and some unrecorded facts about the properties and arrangements of numbers, the discussion of which will interest our readers.

GAS INJURING HOUSE PLANTS.—There is no protection against injurious influence from gas, except covering plants with glass shades. Ventilation, when sufficient for healthy animal life, lessens the unwholesome effect. The dryness, as well as the impurity of gas-lit rooms, must injure plants.

KAFFIRS AND AFGHANS.—Of all our acquaintances none was more welcome to our fireside than one of those singular people, the Siah-posh, or black-vested Kaffirs. He was an uncommonly handsome man of about twenty-five years of age, with an open forehead, blue eyes, and bushy arched eyebrows, his hair and whiskers black, and his figure well set and active. He would sometimes bring us a present of a few partridges, and returning the Mohammedan salutation with which we greeted him, take his seat at the fire without further ceremony. Cross-legged he could not sit, for in this respect the Kaffirs differ from all eastern nations, and, like Europeans, prefer a chair or anything raised to a seat upon the ground. He gave us an animated account of his countrymen, and pressed us to visit them when the passes opened. As an inducement to do so, he promised us plenty of honey and oceans of wine. His sister was married to Mirza Suliman; but though thus connected with Mohammedans, he bore them the most deadly ill-will, and even in their presence would recount the numbers that had fallen by the bow or spear of his countrymen. "The Mussulmans," he said, "were responsible for the blood thus spilt, for since they hunted down the Kaffirs to make them slaves, the latter had retaliated; for the loss of liberty was worse than the loss of life."—*Captain Wood's Journey to the Sources of the Oxus.*

THE QUAKERS AND TEMPERANCE.—Canon Farrar, addressing the Friends' Meeting upon temperance, thus referred to the influence of one of their body:—"It was William Mackin who had the honour of converting to this cause Theobald Mathew, he (William Mackin) being also a member of the Society of Friends. Theobald Mathew was working hard as a Roman Catholic priest among the degraded population of Cork, and one day, on William Mackin visiting the hospital, he saw a sight which you may see any day in any London hospital—the sight of numbers brought there by the appalling diseases and brutal violence of drink—and turning round to the young Catholic priest, with his heart stirred within him, he said, 'Oh, Theobald Mathew, what mightest thou not do if thou wouldst take part in this great work!' Young Mathew thought of it. For several days it was in his mind; for several nights it kept him almost sleepless, and at last, after long prayer, he came to the determination, and rising up, he said words which have since become so memorable: 'Here goes, in the name of God.' That

was how Theobald Mathew—guided, influenced, converted to the cause by a member of the Society of Friends—began a crusade which, for the time being, did much to cripple the whisky trade in Ireland, and which was carried also to England, and gave the first great stimulus to the work in which we are engaged. It was incidentally through him (Father Mathew) that Dr. Guthrie became an abstainer. You know he was being driven in a part of Ireland one very rainy day, and he went into a public-house to get a little whisky, under the mistaken notion (which is not even dispelled yet) that thereby he could keep out the cold. He said to the poor drenched car-driver, 'Won't you come in and have something?' He replied, 'Faith, I won't touch a single drop of it.' 'How is that?' said Dr. Guthrie. He had taken the pledge from Father Mathew. Dr. Guthrie, thinking over it, considered that here was a poor uneducated peasant who was strong enough to resist temptation because he saw it would lead to his own ruin, and Dr. Guthrie thought that if the car-driver was strong enough to exercise that resolution he ought to be. Thus it was that he became an abstainer, and carried on the work in Scotland, and through him thousands in England and Scotland carried it on also. Therefore you are obliged, as members of this society, not only by the general traditions of the body to which you belong, but also by their special influence in this particular work in the past, to promote it."

TURKISH MISRULE.—The provinces are plundered, but not to the advantage of the first plunderer. From the lowest to the highest, each in turn is forced to yield up his booty to his next superior, on whom he is dependent, and from whom he has purchased his place. So things proceed upwards from rank to rank, and we must go very high indeed before we come to the first cause, to the *primum mobile* of the meanest village extortion. The plunder is reaped from many quarters, but it is to the Sultan and his favourites that it all comes in the end. Sometimes, indeed, the demands of the Government are pressing, and they are met by special requisitions. The mode of procedure is a simple one. An order is sent off to some local Governor for the sums needed, and he has no choice but to produce them. His services would soon be dispensed with if he were to be found failing in such a duty as this. The requirements of the Palace are more regular, and the method by which they are satisfied is much the same. The chief difference is that the course is a little more roundabout. The whole machinery of government in Asia Minor is set at work and is kept going in order to meet the wants of the Sultan or of some one in direct intercourse with the Sultan—a eunuch, a female favourite, or, perhaps, some one still lower, in direct intercourse with these. It is for such recipients that industrious villagers are overtaxed and robbed. The Christians are not the chief sufferers. These, our correspondent says, can mostly manage to make themselves heard, or can find champions who will be heard for them. The poor Mussulmans have no advocates, and it is on them, accordingly, that the burden descends and rests in the last instance.—*The Times*.

SILK FARMING IN AUSTRALIA.—An association has been formed in Sydney for promoting the silk industry, which it is considered may find employment for many women and children. In the colony of Victoria there is already a Ladies' Sericultural Society for a similar purpose. In that colony there is protection for married women's property, and part of the unattached female population, it is hoped, may be able to live upon the produce of the silk farms. Mulberry-trees are being distributed throughout the colonies.

NEW CRATER IN THE MOON.—Dr. Klein, a German astronomer, has recently called the attention of astronomers to a lunar crater some three miles wide, which had not before been observed, and which, he feels sure, was not in existence two years ago. Astronomers have long since given up all hope of tracing either the signs of actual life upon the moon or traces of the past existence of living creatures there. But there are still among them those who believe that by sedulous and careful scrutiny processes of material change may be recognised in that seemingly inert mass. In reality, perhaps, the wonder rather is that signs of change should not be often recognised, than that from time to time a new crater should appear or the walls of old craters fall in. The moon's surface is exposed to variations of temperature compared with which those affecting the surface of our earth are altogether trifling. It is true there is no summer or winter in the moon. Sir W. Herschel has spoken of the lunar seasons as though they resembled our own, but in reality they are very different. The sun's midday height at any lunar station is only about three degrees greater in summer than in winter; whereas our summer sun is 47 degs. higher in the sky

at noon than our winter sun. In fact, a midsummer's day on the moon does not differ more from a midwinter's day, as far as the sun's actual path on the sky is concerned, than with us the 17th of March differs from the 25th, or the 19th of September from the 27th. It is the change from day to night which chiefly affects the moon's surface. In the lunar year of seasons, lasting 346½ of our days, there are only 11½ lunar days, each lasting 29½ of ours. Thus day lasts more than a fortnight, and is followed by a night of equal length. Nor is this all. There is neither air nor moisture to produce such effects as are produced by our air and the moisture it contains in mitigating the heat of day and the cold of night. Under the sun's rays the moon's surface becomes hotter and hotter as the long lunar day proceeds, until at last its heat exceeds that of boiling water; but so soon as the sun has set the heat thus received is rapidly radiated away into space (no screen of moisture-laden air checking its escape), and long before lunar midnight a cold exists compared with which the bitterest weather ever experienced by Arctic voyagers would be oppressively hot.

EDINBURGH STUDENTS' CLUB-ROOMS.—A correspondent wishes us to make known to graduates and former pupils of the University of Edinburgh, that funds are being raised for establishing a club for students. There are no common rooms in the Scottish universities, and many of the students, who all live in private houses or lodgings, have to get their meals and find their recreation where they can. Two or three years ago a temporary place was opened, under the sanction of the professors, near the college, and the crowds who frequented it attested the need of some such accommodation. It is now proposed to obtain a more suitable club-house; and a bazaar, under very influential patronage, is expected to provide sufficient funds. We wish all success to the project.

POST-CARDS.—The numbers of post-cards have steadily increased, without affecting the number of letters, as it was feared they might do. In 1863 the letters per each 100 of population was 2,181; in 1871 cards were introduced, and the number of letters per each 100 of population was 2,751. The average rate of increase of letters is about 70 per each 100 persons. In 1873 the number of cards delivered was 72,000,000; last year it was 102,000,000, an increase of one-third in four years.

A PATAGONIAN GIANT.—A pretty large colony of Welsh within the last few years have settled on the River Gamwy, in Patagonia, and it appears that they are doing well there, and that the Gospel of Christ is regularly preached there in the native tongue. The Welsh do not leave their religion behind them when they go as colonists, and in Patagonia, as in many parts of the United States, the Gospel is preached in the native tongue of the old Cymry. A letter from a Welsh friend, among other interesting details, refers to the Patagonian people, with a portrait of one of them: "I am enclosing to you a photograph of a native giant. He belongs to the tribe of the Tsiwelts, or the great Patagonians, of whose size wonderful tales were told by sailors who visited these coasts in former times. It was said that the people of this country were from eight to nine feet high, but that must be exaggerated, at least as far as we have seen. Nevertheless, it is believed that these are the greatest people as to size on the face of the globe. It is calculated by the number that have visited this settlement that there are some two or three thousand of them in this vicinity. The average height of the people is rather above six feet. The tallest that we have seen here was seven feet four inches, and he was correspondingly stout. The greatest around his body under the arms measured five feet three inches. This man that sat for his photograph, and whose name is Wisil, is above six feet, and weighs twenty stone (280 lb.) He is poor in circumstances, and has no family. Old bachelors, among the Patagonians, are, as a rule, very badly off, spending their money on intoxicating drinks and gambling. Wisil spends every penny he can get in this way. I am sorry to say that they were taught to drink and gamble by the Spaniards who visited them, and who were professed Christians. Married men are always in better circumstances. The women, as a rule, are cautious in their choice of husbands, and carefully avoid bad characters. The natives of late have been very reluctant to visit any civilised settlement except this. Here they make themselves free, because, I believe, knives are never used among us, and we never deceive them in trading, as others do. But even in this settlement, I am sorry to say, they succeed in getting a supply of intoxicating drinks, which I consider a black spot upon our good name, and which is making much mischief among the natives."—T. L.

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